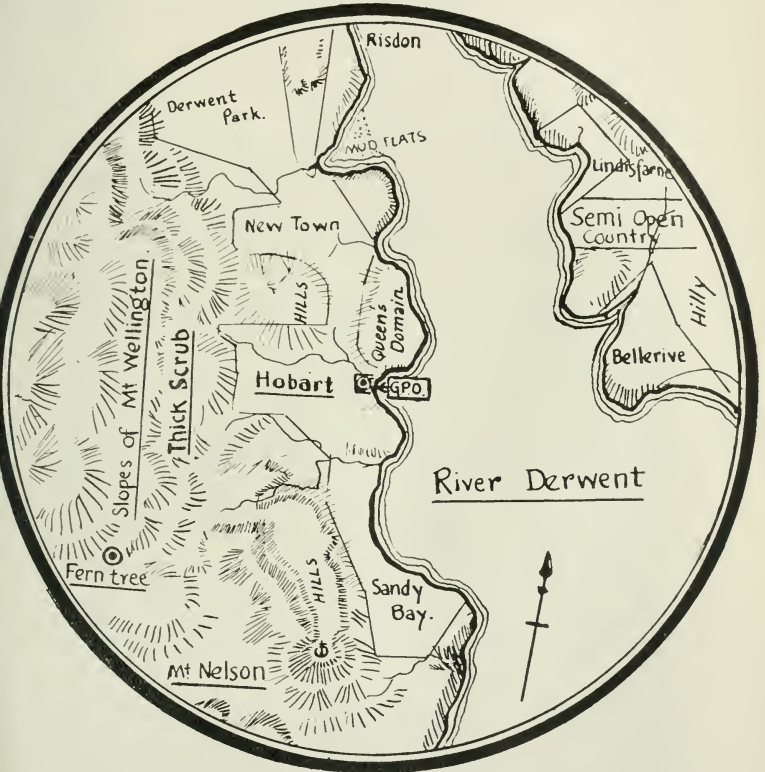


Birds of Hobart

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Of the six Australian capital cities none is perhaps better than Hobart from an ornithologist's point of view. Situated on the banks of the River Derwent, backed by the diabase



Country within a five-mile radius of Hobart General Post Office.

massif of Mount Wellington (4166 ft.) and flanked by well-wooded hills, the city is visited by a large number of birds, its surroundings offering nearly every class of country suitable for them. Many species frequent the more open country on the

eastern side of the river, and at times many sea-birds are noticed on the river itself. Comparatively speaking, Tasmania is rather short of birds, both of varieties and individuals of varieties, but, as will be seen from our list, the locality of Hobart cannot lay claim to the scarcity. In the compilation of our list we fixed on a five-mile radius from the General Post Office in the centre of the town, and recorded both the resident birds and casual visitors within that area (see map). No fewer than 88 species have been noticed. Those species breeding within the five-mile radius are signified by an asterisk.

The following is our list:—

Coturnix pectoralis. Stubble Quail.—This species is fairly common on the eastern side of the River Derwent at certain seasons of the year. The birds do not, however, stay in one place for long.

Synoicus ypsilophorus. Swamp Quail.*—Odd flocks move about the outskirts of the city and on the Queen's Domain, where cover is usually plentiful. This bird has also been observed in scrubby patches on the slopes of Mt. Wellington.

Phaps chalcoptera. Bronzewing.*—A fairly common species on the semi-open slopes of Mt. Nelson, and round about Bellerive on the opposite side of the river.

Phaps elegans. Brush Bronzewing.*—Like *P. chalcoptera*, this species is common, but frequents denser country like that of Mt. Wellington, where they breed freely. We sometimes find their nests in gorse bushes two or three feet from the ground. A comparatively tame species so far as our experience goes.

Fulica atra. Coot.—Occasionally the Coot may be seen in the River Derwent near Hobart, but is very shy.

Eudyptula minor. Little Penguin.—Common in the River Derwent and at Sandy Bay. We have found odd birds hiding amongst rocks on shore in the process of moulting. Fairly large rookeries exist on Bruny Island, a few miles south of Hobart.

Oceanites oceanicus. Yellow-webbed Storm-Petrel.—This dainty and tiny little Petrel has been observed in the river just within the five-mile radius. It is, however, a rare visitor; but is common outside the entrance to the Derwent.

Puffinus tenuirostris. Short-tailed Petrel.—The "Mutton Bird," which provides a living for the islanders of Bass Strait, is a fairly common bird in the River Derwent in summer and autumn, when it may be seen in large flocks, all wheeling and dipping at the water simultaneously. They are fast flyers, and are always zig-zagging about the river. They often come close to the steamers, thus allowing one a good view of them.

Sterna caspia. Caspian Tern.—Generally to be observed slowly flying up or down the river on the lookout for food. We have seen them as far as 25 miles from the sea hunting over shallow lagoons. It is one of the most handsome terns.

Sterna striata. White-fronted Tern.—Probably the commonest Tern about Hobart. May be seen practically any day in small flocks, and in company with the Silver Gull.

Larus novaehollandiae. Silver Gull.—Of the various species of sea-birds frequenting the River Derwent, the Silver Gull is the most familiar. It congregates in immense flocks, especially at low tide, along the beach or on reefs or mud banks. A fairly large rookery exists on Cape Frederick Henry, Bruny Island, a few miles south of Hobart.

Gabianus pacificus. Pacific Gull.—Like the preceding species, the Pacific Gull is very common about the harbour, often perching on the top of vessel's masts. Frequently seen in flocks of from 15 to 20 birds.

Catharacta skua. Southern Skua.—A somewhat rare visitor to Hobart, but specimens have been seen in the vicinity of Bellerive.

Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ. Spur-winged Plover.—Common about Hobart and suburbs. May often be seen feeding in company with Silver and Pacific Gulls on mud banks at low tide. Frequently flies over the city at night.

Zonifer tricolor. Black-breasted Plover.*—Common on the Bellerive side of the Derwent, where it breeds. Last year we found three nests in a small paddock. We have noticed this species to be much more pugnacious than the Spur-winged Plover.

Limosa lapponica. Barred-tailed Godwit.—During the summer these birds come down to Tasmania from Siberia, and in 1919 one visited a small lagoon on the outskirts of Bellerive. They have not since been observed so close.

Notophox novæ-hollandiæ. Blue (White-fronted) Heron.—Occasionally odd birds may be seen at Bellerive; but they are not common. Two years ago a pair nested along the river just outside the five-mile radius, but some local "sportsmen" found the nest, and being unable to climb the tree, shot the young birds from the ground.

Chenopsis atrata. Black Swan.—A rather irregular visitor. Usually to be seen passing down the river Derwent in flocks of about half a dozen birds at the beginning of the shooting season, when they have been disturbed from their usual feeding grounds.

Anas superciliosa. Grey (Black) Duck.—Frequents the upper reaches of the Derwent, and occasionally may be seen within the five-mile radius, more especially during the evenings.

Phalacrocorax carbo. Black Cormorant.—Fairly common birds about the river, frequenting the bays, where they take their toll of fish. Have also observed them half way up Mt. Wellington "fishing" at creeks, and have seen them perching on factory chimneys on the outskirts of the city.

Phalacrocorax fuscescens. White-breasted Cormorant.—Does not frequent the harbour waters to the same extent as *P. carbo*.

Microcarbo melanoleucus. Little Cormorant.—Fairly plentiful in the vicinity of the harbour, where they may be seen diving for their food.

Sula serrator. Australian Gannet.—May occasionally be seen slowly flying up the river past Hobart, and sometimes reach about 30 miles from the sea. Breed on lonely Mewstone Rock, south of Tasmania.

Uroaetus audax. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—We have observed this splendid bird on the outskirts of Bellerive, and have heard of its appearance on Mt. Nelson.

Haliaeetus leucogaster. White-bellied Sea-Eagle.—This fine bird may occasionally be seen up the River Derwent, often winding up in great spirals till it resembles a small Sparrow against the clouds.

Falco peregrinus. Peregrine Falcon.—A common bird about Hobart, and perhaps the greatest enemy of owners of homing Pigeons. These birds have been taken off the protected list, and rewards are paid for their heads.

Ieracidea berigora. Brown Hawk.*—By no means a rare bird in the five-mile radius. A few years ago they bred on Mt. Nelson. They are common all through the Bellerive district.

Ninox nova-zeelandiae maculata.—Spotted Owl.*—Common about the city at night. In the day time it retires to the adjoining ranges, where it may often be seen resting amongst the dense vegetation along creeks.

Glossopsitta concinna. Musk Lorikeet.—These pretty birds periodically sweep across Hobart, and enter every garden, park and reserve where the eucalypts are flowering, remaining here just as long as the honey is available. Their last stay was a particularly long one, appearing in March, 1920, they did not leave until April, 1921. They have not appeared since. At the approach of evening they congregate in big flocks in the trees, and pairing off, make love by "kissing" each other with their beaks, chattering incessantly during the process. Intruding birds are often given a rough time.

Calyptorhynchus funereus. Black Cockatoo.—The Black Cockatoo is not a resident within the five-mile radius, but may commonly be seen over Hobart and on the slopes of Mt. Wellington, especially during very wintry periods.

Platycercus caledonicus. Green Rosella. This Parrot is confined to Tasmania and adjacent islands. Very common about Hobart and Bellerive, where it sometimes raids orchards.

Platycercus eximius. Rosella.*—Probably the most numerous of the *Psittacidae* about Hobart and suburbs. It breeds on the Queen's Domain close to the city.

Pedargus strigoides. Frogmouth.*—We have seen this bird on the slopes of Mt. Nelson, where it nests, and at Bellerive. It is fairly common, but is only animated during the night, when it sets forth on its quest for insects.

Chaetura caudacuta. Spine-tailed Swift.—A regular annual visitor, appearing here usually about the middle of February, and leaving again about the end of March or first week in April. Immense flocks are sometimes seen near Bellerive.

Cuculus pallidus. Pallid Cuckoo.*—A very common species about Hobart and Bellerive. Arrives about beginning of September, and leaves again end of March. Last year we added the Tasmanian Pipit (*Anthus australis bistriatus*) to the list of the Pallid Cuckoo's foster parents.

Cacomantis flabelliformis. Fan-tailed Cuckoo.*—The commonest Cuckoo about Hobart. Mt. Wellington is their favourite spot, while the open country on the eastern side of the Derwent is also frequented. These birds often call at night.

Chalococcyx basalis. Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo.*—In common with other species, this bird arrives from the mainland in September and departs about March.

Chalcites plagosus. Bronze Cuckoo.*—Like *C. basalis* this Cuckoo is a regular and very common visitor to the south of Tasmania. The Yellow-tailed Thornbill (*Geobasilus chrysorrhoea*) appears to act as foster-parent more than any other bird.

Hirundo neoxena. Welcome Swallow.*—A common visitor, arriving somewhere about August or September, and departing again some time late in April. A few birds remain here all the year round.

Hylochelidon nigricans. Tree-Martin.*—In company with Swallows, the Tree Martin comes right into the city, and appears to remain here longer than the former. Nests are often found in hollow trees.

Petroica multicolor. Scarlet-breasted Robin.*—A very common resident, nesting on Mt. Wellington principally.

Petroica phoenicea. Flame-breasted Robin.*—At the approach of winter this bird moves to the lowlands from the mountains, returning again in the spring. They are very common.

Erythrodyras rhodinogaster. Pink-breasted Robin.*—A resident of Mt. Wellington, where it may often be seen in the gullies.

Amaurodyras vittata. Dusky Robin.*—A Tasmanian bird, very common about Hobart and Bellerive, where they breed. Open timber country is most frequented.

Pachycephala pectoralis. Golden-breasted Whistler.*—Very common on Mt. Wellington, where they breed.

Pachycephala olivacea. Olive Whistler.*—Together with *P. pectoralis*, this Whistler breeds on the slopes of Mt. Wellington, the nests often being made from long strips of the "stringy" bark (*Eucalyptu obliqua*).

Rhipidura flabellifera. Dusky Fantail.*—Common birds about Hobart, and very tame. They nest on Mt. Wellington, Mt. Nelson, and on the eastern side of the River.

Myiagra cyanoleuca. Satin Flycatcher.*—Arrives from the mainland towards the end of October, and departs again in March. The lower slopes of Mt. Wellington, where it breeds, are much frequented by this species.

Graucalus novæ-hollandiæ. Small-billed Cuckoo-Shrike.*—Arrives at Hobart during the summer, and breeds within the five mile radius. Known in Tasmania as the "Summer-Bird."

Cinclosoma punctatum. Spotted Ground-Bird.*—Bellerive appears to be the favourite spot of this bird, where it breeds annually. They are very local, and a pair will occupy a certain spot for months.

Calamanthus fuliginosus. Striated Field-Wren.*—This pretty little *Calamanthus* frequents the country near Bellerive, though it is not common. In the breeding season it has a very sweet song.

Oreocincla lunulata. Ground (Mountain) Thrush.*—A common resident of the gullies of Mt. Wellington. Breeds here during July and August. Speaking from our experience, this bird is very tame, for on one occasion we had almost to lift the bird off her nest in order to photograph the young beneath her.

Epthianura albifrons. White-fronted Chat.—An irregular visitor to Hobart, but fairly common on the outskirts of Bellerive. They sometimes move round in large flocks.

Acanthiza pusilla diemenensis. Tasmanian Thornbill.*—A very common bird on both sides of the River Derwent; frequently the foster parents of the Bronze and Fantail Cuckoos.

Acanthiza ewingi. Ewing Thornbill.*—A fairly common bird on Mt. Wellington, where it breeds.

Gebasileus chrysoerhous. Yellow-tailed Thornbill.*—A very plentiful bird about Hobart and Bellerive.

Sericornis humilis. Brown Scrub-Wren.*—Very common in the undergrowth on Mt. Wellington.

Acanthornis magna. Scrub-Tit.*—A very shy bird, and not so common as *S. humilis*.

Malurus cyaneus. Blue Wren.*—Very plentiful about Hobart and on the eastern side of the River Derwent.

Artamus cyanopterus. Wood-Swallow.*—This species is fairly plentiful on the outskirts of Bellerive and Lindisfarne, where it breeds. "The date of arrival varies considerably, much depending on the climatic conditions. Some years it arrives early in August, and others not until mid-September" (Littler, "Birds of Tas."). Departs for the mainland from March to April.

Colluricincla harmonica. Grey Shrike-Thrush.*—Fairly plentiful on both sides of the river. Locally known as "Whistling Dick," and is a great favourite.

Zosterops lateralis. White-eye.*—Large flocks of the White-eye fly about Hobart. The bird breeds freely on the slopes of Mt. Wellington, and in suburban gardens.

Pardalotus punctatum. Spotted Pardalote.*—A very common species on both sides of the river, breeding in holes which the birds drill into the sides of a suitable bank.

Pardalotus striatus affinis. Yellow-tipped Pardalote.*—Common about the lower slopes of Mt. Wellington, and on the opposite side of the river.

Pardalotus quadragintus. Many-spotted Pardalote.*—Not so common as the two preceding birds, but may often be seen in gardens at the foot of Mt. Wellington. A Tasmanian species.

Melithreptus validirostris. Strong-billed Honey-eater.*—Plentiful on Mt. Wellington, frequenting the tops of the highest gums, and scarcely ever seen on the eastern side of the Derwent.

Melithreptus affinis. Black-headed Honey-eater.*—One of the foster-parents of the Pallid Cuckoo. Common on both sides of the river.

Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris. Spinebill.*—Very plentiful on Mt. Wellington and round about Bellerive. Also frequents suburban gardens a lot.

Meliphaga flavicollis. Yellow-throated Honey-eater.*—One of the commonest Honey-eaters within the five-mile radius, breeding on both sides of the Derwent. This bird is confined to Tasmania and adjacent islands.

Meliornis pyrrhoptera. Crescent Honey-eater.*—Frequents both the heavily timbered and open country in great numbers.

Meliornis novae-hollandiae. White-bearded Honey-eater.*—Appears to prefer thickly wooded tracts, such as the slopes of Mt. Nelson and Mt. Wellington, where it breeds.

Myzantha garrula. Noisy Miner.*—The Miner is common on the Queen's Domain near the city as well as on the eastern side of the river. A very noisy bird.

Anthochaera paradoxus. Yellow Wattle-Bird.—The Wattle-Bird occasionally comes within the five mile radius, and may sometimes be seen honey-hunting amongst the native fuchsia (*Correa speciosa*) near the ground.

Anthochaera chrysoptera. Brush Wattle-Bird.—In the winter months the Brush Wattle Bird comes into suburban gardens in search of food, but is at no time plentiful.

Anthus australis bistriatus. Tasmanian Pipit.*—Another foster parent of the Pallid Cuckoo. Breeds on the Queen's Domain and other places close to the city. Very plentiful on the Bellerive side of the river.

Zonaeginthus bellus. Beautiful Fire-tail.*—The only Finch indigenous to Tasmania, and not very common in the five-mile radius. Birds are trapped a lot, and get shy. Seen on both sides of the river.

Corvus australis. Australian Raven.—May frequently be seen about Hobart, but have not yet found it breeding here.

Strepera fuliginosa. Black Bell-Magpie.—A common bird on Mt. Wellington. Often steals fruit from orchards, and is usually shot at on sight, especially as its flesh is very palatable.

Strepera versicolor arguta. Hill Bell-Magpie.—The "Black Magpie," as this bird is called, is by no means a common visitor to the city, being almost entirely confined to the upper mountain regions. How-

ever, during very cold periods odd birds find their way to the lower ranges, and in the winter of 1921 we saw a pair on the eastern side of the river near Lindisfarne.

Gymnorhina hypoleuca. White-backed Magpie.*—A common bird in the open country on the eastern side of the River Derwent.

Cracticus torquatus. Grey Butcher-Bird.*—The "Jackass" as this bird is locally named, is fairly plentiful in the vicinity of Hobart and the suburbs of Bellerive and Lindisfarne. As a home-defender this bird is very pugnacious.

We are informed on good authority that the following species have also been observed within the five mile radius:—*Turnix varia* (Painted Quail), *Circus approximans* (Swamp Hawk), *Stipiturus malachurus* (Emu Wren).

INTRODUCED BIRDS.

Turtur ferrago. Indian Turtle Dove.*—Very common. These birds were introduced to Tasmania by the late Mrs. H. L. Roberts of "Beaumaris."

Carduelis carduelis. Goldfinch.*—Very plentiful about Hobart and suburbs. Breeds freely.

Passer domesticus. House Sparrow.*—Very common.

Sturnus vulgaris. Starling.*—The birds, at certain seasons of the year, gather in immense flocks and spend the nights in the oak trees in the city gardens.

Spinetailed Swifts in Tas.—The "tale of the Swifts" (*Chactura caudacuta*) for the summer of 1922 is very soon told. They did not appear on our North-West coast until 8th March, when at 3.30 p.m. some passed swiftly towards the west, flying rather low. Afterwards, a large number came from the direction of the beach (north), and, passing to south and south-west, stayed there for some time, many of them at a great height, and circling in their mazy dance. At 6.30 (about sunset) some more passed rapidly, singly or in pairs, to the westward. The day had been sultry, foreboding change, with great numbers of flying ants and other insects in the air; wind, first easterly, afterwards S.W., light; sky mostly covered with alto-stratus cloud. The following day was very hot with north wind, and the second day there was a squally north-wester, with clouds of dust and a rough sea. On 28th March there was a solar halo at 9 a.m., and a solitary Swift appeared at a great height, flying within the circumference of the ring, and making somewhat in a north-easterly direction. In the early afternoon the sun was exceedingly warm; later the sky became overcast, a strong N.W. wind sprang up with heavy showers until early next morning. Thus were the forecasts of those two prognosticators of cyclonic disturbance, the halo and the Spine-tailed Swift, again fulfilled. This was the last of the birds seen on our coast, although Mr. H. C. Thompson recorded them as late as 15th April in Launceston, which, being in a basin surrounded by hills, forms a more sheltered feeding-ground in late autumn than does the open coast.—H. STUART DOVE, F.Z.S., W. Devonport, Tasmania.